the escort of two "Q" ships, the *Mavis and Rule,* which had been sent out from this country for the purpose.

It was not until the 19th May—over three weeks after the Cabinet decision—that the Admiralty went so far as to appoint a Committee to study the question of regular convoys. This Committee sat for three weeks and went into the whole question of convoying minutely and with great care. They had to settle routes and the number of ships in each convoy—how to group them according to speed—the sailing instructions to be given. They had also to extort protecting craft from the Admiralty* It was a laborious process, for the Board were convinced that their torpedo boats were more usefully employed on other duties. In arriving at their final recommendations the Committee were helped by the success that attended two experiments.

Committee on convoys set up

Success of the experiments

"During the sittings of the Committee,, the convoy from Hampton Roads with H.M.S. *Roxburgh* (Captain Whitehead, R.N.) as ocean escort had sailed on 24th May with 12 ships; two of these vessels, the *Ravenshoe,* with a cargo of sugar, and the *Highbury* with nitrate, were detached, because they could not keep up with the convoy, and sent into Halifax to be routed independently. . . . The convoy arrived safely in 15 days.

Captain Whitehead reported to the First Sea Lord *that the station-keeping was excellent, and that he was prepared to take charge 0/30 vessels instead of 12"**

The Gibraltar convoy was equally successful. But these disappointing successes simply irritated the

* Extract from Ministry of Shipping Report on Convoys.